

PREPARING for the performance planning discussion

WHAT to cover in the discussion

The performance planning discussion sets the stage for a year's worth of effort on the part of the employee. Planning discussions can be conducted in a variety of ways. However the planning occurs, the following bare essentials should be a part of the discussion (or discussions):

1. **Results** – What results will be expected? How will they be measured? How will these results contribute to the unit's or agency's success? What are the priorities?
2. **Behaviors or values** – What behaviors are expected? How will they be measured? What values must be adhered to? Why are they important and how will they help the employee meet the results expectations?
3. **Development** – How can the employee put strengths to better use or build up skills that will enhance performance?
4. **Resources** – What resources does the employee need? How can the supervisor help ensure the employee's success?
5. **On-going performance management** – How will performance be tracked during the cycle? (Regular one-on-ones, status reports, staff meetings, etc.)
6. **End-of-cycle appraisal** – How will the employee's performance be evaluated at the end of the cycle? What does the rating scale look like?
7. **Documentation** – Sign and date the work plan to indicate the discussion has been held.
8. **Information sharing** – Clarify what work plan information will be shared within the unit and what information will be confidential.

HOW to prepare for the discussion

Here are some tips supervisors and employees can use to prepare for the performance planning discussion:

<i>Supervisors:</i>	<i>Employees:</i>
Review agency's top-level goals and strategy If your agency has a mission statement, a strategic plan and a set of high-level goals, make sure you are familiar with the current versions. If there are levels of management between yourself and the top, it is helpful to know what the chain of command above you is being held accountable for. Think about how your results expectations align with these higher-level goals.	Understand agency's top-level goals and your role in achieving them Ideally, your supervisor will share this information with you prior to the performance planning discussion. If not, ask for it or seek it out on your own. Think about how your work fits in and contributes to these higher-level goals.
Identify which of your own results expectations should be divided up and delegated Think about the relative priority of your results expectations and what your direct reports need to contribute in order for these results to be achieved. Consider also how appropriate it would be to delegate a "chunk" of one of your results expectations to a particular direct report based on that person's position, experience, skills and interests.	Think about how you contribute to your supervisor's results expectations Make a list of ways you can contribute to the achievement of your supervisor's results expectations and of the higher-level agency goals. Identify which of these higher-level goals you are most capable of and most interested in supporting.

<i>Supervisors:</i>	<i>Employees:</i>
<p>Clarify your employees' roles and anticipate the results expectations they need to set in order to fulfill their roles</p> <p>Any information about new or changing responsibilities that you can provide in advance of the actual discussion would be richly appreciated by your employees. If they are not clear on what their job responsibilities are, do not wait until the goal-setting discussion to spring this news on them! If there are any projects that you know they will be responsible for, let them know in advance.</p>	<p>Review and update the results expectations from the prior performance cycle that support your role and draft new results expectations for any major projects</p> <p>Look at your results expectations from the prior year and think about how they should be revised (if at all) for the coming year. Seek information from your supervisor about new or revised responsibilities and any new projects you might be undertaking.</p>
<p>Review the behavioral expectations that apply to your employees' roles</p> <p>This will become important during the upcoming discussion as questions arise about how to achieve the results expectations, what the boundaries are within which employees are free to exercise their own discretion, what behaviors are rewarded and what behaviors are sanctioned.</p>	<p>Identify the behavioral expectations that are most important to achieving your results expectations</p> <p>As you prepare your thoughts on the results expectations you will be working on this year, you should also consider which skills will be most important for achieving these goals. Consider whether the challenges ahead call upon skills you possess or lack and how you can best take advantage of the situation.</p>
<p>Review any development plans currently in place</p> <p>You should be familiar with the development plans your direct reports have been working on. What developmental progress have they made on their plans? What new developmental opportunities have arisen based on their performance in the prior year? What skills, if further developed or put to better use, will enable them to better achieve the expected results?</p>	<p>Think about your development needs</p> <p>How can you develop yourself to ensure more effective completion of your most important results expectations? Some factors to consider: your performance in the past year, the requirements of anticipated high-priority results expectations for the coming year, strengths you have not had a chance to fully use and an understanding of the skills that apply to your position</p>